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Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.

All communications should be addressed to ALEXANDER FULLERTON, 144 Madison Avenue, New York.

FOR PARAGRAPHS UNDER THE WORD "ANS." THE EDITOR IS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE.

September, 1893.

QUESTION CCLII.

If Masters really exist, why do they not make themselves known to earnest seekers after truth, and especially to such as are working for the good of mankind? And why do they not effectuate peace on earth and right education of the young?

W. Q. J.—This question has been very frequently answered, and even by the Masters themselves. As to the last part, they said in the *Occult World* that if it were possible to alter the state of things and to make a peaceful earth and a right humanity without following the law of evolution, they would willingly do it, but mankind can only be altered step by step. They have also stated that they do not make themselves objectively known to believers in them except in those cases where those believers are ready in all parts of their nature, are definitely pledged to them, with the full understanding of the meaning of the pledge. But they have also stated that they help all earnest seekers after truth, and that it is not necessary for those seekers to know from where the help comes so long as it is received. In the *Path* this subject was discussed in its other bearings. Personally I know that the Masters do help power-

fully, though unseen, all those who earnestly work and sincerely trust in their higher nature, while they follow the voice of conscience without doubt or cavil.

Ans.—The first part of the Question implies either that earnest seekers and workers have a *right* to personal intercourse with Masters or that such intercourse is needful for their successful work. But where is the proof of either assumption? To seek truth and to do good are the duty of each man; every duty performed brings its fitting reward; the fitting reward for the search after truth is the finding it, and that for doing good is the reception of good; but how can it be shown that the fitting reward is a meeting with Masters? The conditions needful for successful work are intelligence, industry, and persistence, aided by the good will of Higher Powers; but why is it necessary that those Powers should be visibly disclosed? Hence neither implication can be justified.

The second part of the Question implies that an existing and powerful force should of necessity overcome at once every evil. For if Masters ought to ensure universal peace and right education, they ought no less to ensure just government, sagacious laws, wise marriages, sound principles of commerce and finance, proper hygienic practices, in fact every possible good which humanity needs and only slowly acquires. But why? An ideal condition would exclude earthquakes and droughts and accidents, yet we do not fault the Cosmic Providence because these things exist: an ideal world would exclude wars and ignorance and misgovernment; why should we fault the Masters because such are found in this?

The truth is that it is no part of the mission of Masters to violently revolutionize the natures of men, and anyhow They could not do it. Ordinary men have as much right to their chosen lines of action as Masters have, and it is no more permissible to constrain one than the other. But even if permissible it would be impracticable. The laws of being encircle Masters as truly as everybody else, and one law is that progress in thought, in desire, and in morals must go on through a gradual experience which distinguishes right from wrong and leads

to the deliberate choice of right. That was the path which, under the law, the Masters trod Themselves, and They have not the wish, and would not have the power, to substitute a coercive push for an elective act. Nor would we be the gainers if turned into moral puppets. Indeed, if Masters are in wisdom and ability what the querent justly assumes, the fact that They act as They do is the very best proof that it is the right act. Hence it is well to perceive this and to imitate Them, *i.e.* to use every means to circulate right doctrine and to stimulate moral motive, fostering every good work and helping men to higher actions and ideals, but never supposing that human nature is to be constrained into truth. Any one who desires to meliorate the condition of society has abundant channels for all possible activity, and may very well assume that the due use of these is what the Masters Themselves favor, what They Themselves illustrate, and what They would be glad to see adopted by all who share Their aims and should therefore share Their methods.

QUESTION CCLIII.

Is sympathy a quality of Kama? If not, of what principle is it a part? Should it be indulged to the extent of having one's enjoyment of a pleasure almost destroyed because so many who would like to enjoy it cannot from want of money?

W. Q. J.—Sympathy comes from *kama* sometimes, and sometimes is derived from other parts of our constitution. It is often a disease with unintelligent persons, or in those who have not disciplined their minds and do not use their judgment or whose judgment is deficient. But sympathy in its highest aspect must flow from the spiritual part of our nature. However, I think that in its ordinary exhibition it is derived from the principle of desire acting with the mind, the memory, and the sensations. Very often it is false; but true sympathy can never be false, and no matter what principle in our nature it arises from, being a noble and healthful thing, it should be exercised, always however with judgment.

It would certainly be folly to allow our sympathies to carry us so away that we are plunged ourselves into needless sorrow, for in such case we will lose power to judge how to be able to act for the benefit of others. The mere fact that others have no money is not in itself a proper cause for arousing sympathy. The want of money is not the cause of trouble, but the desire for money is. We may sympathize with others who have no money, but not because they are deficient in that means; it should be on account of their failure to see that within themselves is the realization of happiness, and that in fact they should not depend upon anything outside for true enjoyment.

Ans.—Sympathy would seem to arise from the coöperation of imagination with emotion. A man sees another in suffering: he imaginatively puts himself in the other's place, thus comprehending what the suffering must be; and the pity for pain becomes more keen through that realization of it. In fact, the derivation of the word expresses this, it being from the Greek *sun*, with, and *pathos*, suffering, a suffering with, and one only *suffers with* another if one for the time identifies oneself with the other's trouble and the emotions caused by it. This is the reason why real sympathy is possible only to natures which have a certain breadth of functioning, which can get out of themselves, put themselves in another's place, make real a state of feeling not personally experienced. If a man has no understanding of or compassion for any forms of thought, mental life, emotional pleasure or pain beyond what are normal to himself, his limitations are very soon reached and his capacity for apprehension is bounded by his untrained nature. It is true that this is in certain men to some extent supplemented by a strong sense of duty, there being a conviction that one should be compassionate for and helpful to palpable sorrow even when there is entire inability to appreciate its cause. Although this is a feeling *for* rather than a feeling *with* another, and although it may exist in a nature essentially cold, it is very greatly to be admired because the deliberate effort dictated by a conscientious principle, finer therefore than the mere prompting of temperament, and it may even accomplish more of good, since

conscience is more potent than sentiment. But undoubtedly in our troubles we turn more to those who understand and feel with us than to those who neither understand nor feel but dutifully force themselves to administer aid. Sometimes sympathy is worth even more than help.

Probably every truly generous soul feels some compunction at its own happiness when it thinks of the many sorely needing the same but unable to procure it. Here, indeed, is one strong difference between the ignoble selfish and the large-minded altruist. The selfish man enjoys a possession the more because others have it not; the altruist enjoys it the less for that reason. And yet, while this feeling of regret is right and true, its indulgence to the extent of destroying one's own enjoyment would be irrational, for no one would be helped thereby. The poor would not gain the pleasure by our cancelling it, and we should be that much worse off without anybody's being the gainer. It is better for one person to have an enjoyment than for nobody to. Happiness is not so abundant that any of it should needlessly be thrown away. If by sacrificing ourselves we can turn the benefit over to somebody else, the case is very different.

QUESTION CCLIV.

Does the Devachanic or incarnating Ego possess qualities or propensities which draw it back to incarnation here?

R. I. M.—At our Branch some held that the Ego in Devachan is purely spiritual and without latent seeds of desire, and that at death or after the individuality separated into two, the immortal and pure, which might be described as taking the upward curve of a circle through Devachan, and the mortal, disintegrating on the downward curve, but its efflorescence meeting the Devachanee and determining its position in life, the two thus again becoming one. Others held that the Devachanee is not wholly spiritual and does possess mental deposits, not only of its last incarnation but perhaps of others, though in Devachan it may be unconscious of them; also that if Kama

Loka and Devachan are states or conditions, if we liken them to misery and happiness, when one is present the other is not, but the Ego which experiences them is the same individual. Which side was correct?

W. Q. J.—A careful study of the philosophy will show that it is held that the Ego in Devachan, consisting of Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, must contain within it the seeds, qualities, or propensities which will draw it back to life on earth again. If this is not so, then there would never be any reïncarnation whatever. If this be so, as I believe it is, then all the rest of the discussion seems to be merely discussion in a circle about nothing, but that which will lead to mental confusion. The last part of the discussion is settled by reflecting that if the Ego using Manas in Devachan keeps itself in a state or condition which is connected with earth life, it will inevitably return to earth-life because of the attraction which it retains for that state of existence.

Ans.—If the Ego in Devachan was purely spiritual, an entity divorced from all the mental and moral qualities and effects of the incarnation closed, all Devachanees would be alike. Devachan would be meaningless both as a scene of reward and as an era of digestion. For there would be no mental ideals to realize, and no experiences to work up into character. Nor could the character advance, as we are told it does, for a real character would not exist. Furthermore, there would be no object in successive incarnations, as each entrance into Devachan would put the Ego where it was when there before; and there would not even be the possibility of them, since the Ego would be practically removed beyond the reach of Karma.

QUESTION CCLV.

Soulless people are spoken of in "Isis". Are they without Egos, or what is meant?

Ans.—The Theosophic tenet as to loss of the soul was only hinted at in H. P. B's earlier writings, one reason doubtless

being that it would have been unintelligible until the sevenfold constitution of man was amply expounded and well grasped. When the exposition had sufficiently proceeded and students were ripe for comprehension of the deeply practical truth as to immortality on the one hand and annihilation on the other, this was treated more copiously, and Theosophists were counselled to give to it all possible publicity as a pungent stimulus to spiritual endeavor by themselves and all it should reach.

The meaning is in part apparent when we consider the word "mindless". A mindless person is one without mind, intelligence. Of course none are strictly such except utter idiots, but the expression suggests a person stupid and dull, impervious to thought, a human being in form but lacking the intellect which raises above the purely animal plane. Now as absence of the mind-principle makes a man mindless, so absence of the soul-principle makes him "soulless". This principle includes conscience, a sense of right, a percipience of and regard to the distinction between good and evil, a capacity for fine and disinterested affection or act,—in brief, a moral sense. Rarely, yet sometimes, one encounters a character void of it. It is not so much that evil is persistent through self-will or perversity as that there is apparently no perception of the difference between right and wrong: moral quality is unseen and unfelt; truth and falsehood, honor and dishonor, are mere names without real distinction. There is absolutely no limit to self-seeking, and the only check on its manifestation is fear of human punishment. Of such a nature, thus destitute of moral sense, we use the word "soulless".

Theosophy explains why this is possible and how it has occured. Every man has within him what H.P.B. calls (*Key*, p. 176) the Higher Ego, Manas the thinking or fifth principle. But this is susceptible of a very obvious division as life's many experiences form the character of its possessor. If his tastes and desires and habitudes steadily uprise, finding affinity with the spiritual principle which is the sixth, the subject of his thought is the elevated and ennobling. If they, on the other hand, steadily descend, finding affinity with the carnal and material, the subject of his thought is the low and degrading. Thus the

dominant tendency draws the mass—so to speak—of the thinking principle towards either Buddhi or Kama. But as long time must pass before the dominance is finally settled and the affinity with the higher or with the lower nature conclusively decided, there is meanwhile a constant struggle between the two. The thought becomes dual, part dwelling upon superior interests, part upon inferior. Personal predilections ultimately determine the result as multitudinous crises give occasion for repeated decisions either way and create each time a stronger habit. Manas becomes Buddhi-Manas or Kama-Manas; in other words, the thinker goes over to the side of good or to the side of evil. The extreme type of the former is the Adept, of the latter the human devil.

When the thinker has absolutely ceased to think or care for good, right having become indifferent to him and his own wishes the only consideration, the sole function of thought is upon the earthly, fleshly, material interests which alone concern it. Higher Manas has disappeared because disused and superfluous. Lower Manas is fully identified with the animal self. As immortality is conditioned upon the union of Buddhi with Manas, and as that possibility has now ceased by the departure of Manas, the human thus situated is not immortal; but as lower Manas united with Kama has a real vitality, it must endure until that vitality is exhausted. Hence the being must reïncarnate till the time when the full measure of its living quality is expended. Karma of course operates continuously in awarding due consequences to the nature thus descending towards extinction, and each succeeding birth is more disastrous and more distressing. An accumulating mass of sin and retribution overwhelms the doomed one in every incarnation, justice being vindicated more obviously as the end draws near. Finally, the vitality being spent, the existence terminates. There is annihilation. This is what is meant in the Bible by "the second death".

During this process the person is "soulless". His higher principles have departed and only the lower are in operation. He has intelligence and energy, but no sense of right, no conscience, no religious or moral principle. The whole matter is

treated in an article by "Harij", entitled "Loss of the Soul", *Path* for March and April, 1891, much more fully than is possible in the small space of the FORUM. See also Mrs. Besant's *Seven Principles*, pages 45 to 47.

QUESTION CCLVI.

The "Secret Doctrine", in its theory of sequential relations between the astral and the gross physical body, adduces spiritualistic phenomena as evidence of the truth or validity of said theory, Vol. I, pages 276 and 297, Vol. II, pages 86-149 and p. 737. In Vol. I, page 258, is found the statement "Like produces like", which admission, taken in connection with the other statements, amounts to a negation of the usual "shell" explanation of spiritualistic materializations, unless it can be shown that these phenomena are realistic (having an intelligent basis) when they support certain theories, and are seemings upon all other occasions.

W Q.J.—It does not appear to me that the statement in the *Secret Doctrine* "Like produces like"—which is a very old Hermetic maxim—taken in connection with the other matters brought forward in the *Secret Doctrine*, is a negation of the Theosophic theory that many, if not all, Spiritualistic materializations are brought about by the agency of astral shells of once-living persons. Nor is the connection at all apparent between this assumed negation and the necessity for showing that those phenomena are "realistic", the questioner appearing to have some new meaning for the word "realistic", as she adds after that word the words "having an intelligent basis". The Theosophical theory about Spiritualistic phenomena has been given over and over again in *Isis*, in the *Secret Doctrine*, in *Lucifer*, in the *Path*, the *Theosophist*, and elsewhere. It has always been claimed that materializations had an intelligent actor or actors behind them. That intelligence is the intelligence of the living medium, of the living sitters of the *séance*, or the automatic or natural intelligence of elemental spirits. H. P. Blavatsky and those who think as she does have always used the phenomena occurring in *séance* rooms as proof

of the theories about the astral world and the astral body, as well as also other established facts such as the facts of hypnotism and the like. The sentence "Like produces like" does not mean nor support the idea that because the transitory materialized thing seen at a *sèance* and which exactly resembles a deceased or living person is the same person; in such a case it would mean that the astral form existing on the astral plane enables us to produce its similar on the physical plane, and by the use of that Hermetic sentence in H.P.B.'s book or in any other the astral shell explanation for materialization is not negatived. It is very plain that the questioner does not fully understand H.P.B's explanation about materializations and other Spiritualistic phenomena.

QUESTION CCLVII.

Man having free-will, is it not probable that some individuals suffer or enjoy that to which their individual Karma does not entitle them, by reason of the acts of others? If so, is not this temporary surplus suffering or enjoyment balanced by the merit or demerit of succeeding incarnations?

W.Q.J.—It seems to me impossible that any person suffers or enjoys anything whatever except through Karma; whether we are in families, nations, or races, and thus suffer and enjoy through general causes, it is still because of our own Karma leading us to that place. In succeeding incarnations we are rewarded or punished according to the merit or demerit of preceding lives, and wherever it is stated in Theosophic books by competent writers that people are "rewarded for unmerited suffering" it always refers to the fact that a person does not himself perceive any connection between the suffering or reward and his own act. Consequently in Devachan he makes for himself what he considers a complete reward for any supposed unmerited suffering, but in his life upon earth he receives only that which he exactly merits, whether it be happiness or the opposite. This is a brief statement of the doctrine, but I think it can be sustained by argument. It seems to me the

whole philosophy would fall to the ground if for a moment we admitted that any suffering or reward was not that to which the individual was exactly entitled, for the largeness of the reward which the Ego makes for itself in Devachan is something that he is entitled to, inasmuch as it balances the mental attitude he assumed while living and satisfies his individual needs without disturbing anyone else.

Ans.—The matter of unmerited suffering was examined in FORUM xi, Question 50. The examination showed that many such cases must of necessity occur, and gave illustrations. It also showed that the fact in no way conflicts with the law of Karma, since certainty, not instantaneity, is what is ensured by that law. The whole argument is very important for anyone who wishes a rational and consistent theory, who cares little for mere assertion and much for proof, and who cannot be content to blink facts which are inconsistent with notions.

In a note to page 161, *Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. says that the words "unmerited sufferings" are those of Master, and adds that "men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which thus do not strictly belong to their own Karma, and for these sufferings they of course deserve compensation". She is here speaking of that compensation as one of the features of Devachan, but there would seem to be nothing incongruous in its also forming an element in a later incarnation. For, observe, compensation for an undeserved sorrow is as much a debt to the individual as is reward for a good act; and if the latter is given on earth, why not the former? Indeed, there would seem special appropriateness in the payment of that debt in the very field where it had been contracted, on just the same principle whereby evil deeds are recompensed on the earth-plane which was the scene of their perpetration. Suppose that a child received a life-long injury from a blundering physician or surgeon. One may say that he could not have so received unless he had deserved; but this is mere assertion without proof, and in view of the arguments in FORUM XI and of the distinct asseveration of H.P.B., such injury is entirely possible as a consequence of another person's act, unmerited and therefore giving right to compensation.

In addition to the compensation in Devachan, it would seem but fair that the next incarnation should include extra strength or beauty or health to indemnify for the loss before. Otherwise the sum total of pleasurable experience on the physical plane would be less than that to which the individual had right, and less because of another's fault. The law of Karma is repugnant to such injustice, and we may therefore well conclude that an undeserved sorrow is compensated for in the earth-life no less than in Devachan.

QUESTION CCLVIII.

Are the majority of people, those who are neither very wicked nor very spiritual, conscious in Kama Loka that they are dead; and are they able to see the Kamic sights with which it is said to be filled? I have read Stanton's "Dreams of the Dead", and although I cannot accept all he says, the information gained from other sources has been too meagre to permit of my discriminating accurately between what is true and what is false.

W.Q.J.—Precisely as physicians know that every human body has its own physical idiosyncracies, which are well known in their effects upon and relations with medicine, so in the state after death the idiosyncracy of the person has an effect upon the state there. There is no positive or definite rule which applies invariably to every being after death. Consequently there are many different kinds of states in "Kama-Loka". Some people are aware that they left the earth, others are unaware of it; some are able to see those they have left behind, others not; and certainly everybody in Kama-Loka is able to see all that pertains to the particular division of that state in which he may be at the time. Mr. Stanton's book is excellent in many respects, but cannot be exhaustive. What he describes is beyond doubt what happens to some persons in Kama-Loka, but he by no means describes all the possible cases or facts of that state. But one thing may be asserted as positively so, or else the whole system is at fault, and that is that the being in Kama-Loka sees whatever pertains to the state in which he is, as it is all a question of state.